

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA
INDIANAPOLIS DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)
)
Plaintiff,)
) 1:09-cr-86-03 SEB-KPF
vs.)
)
CHARLES R. FIELDS,)
)
Defendant.)

ORDER REDUCING CJA VOUCHER

The Court has received and reviewed the CJA Form 20 submitted by defense counsel, Belle T. Choate, seeking \$7,895.00 in Government CJA funds for services rendered in this cause. While the Court appreciates Ms. Choate's willingness to serve on the CJA panel, as well as her experience and competency as counsel, it is concerned that the attorneys' fees sought in this instance appear to be excessive.

In the Court's view, this case was not particularly complex, and nothing suggests that the Defendant was difficult, uncooperative, or had problems understanding the nature of these proceedings, including the charges against him and the possible penalties. Nonetheless, the CJA Form 20 seeks compensation for 23.5 hours of file review and an additional 24 hours of client meetings. The Court also notes that the docket reflects no motions, briefs, sentencing memoranda, or other documents being filed which required extensive legal research or writing, yet the CJA Form 20 seeks compensation for nearly 10 hours of legal research and brief writing.

Given the amount of fees sought in light of the relatively low level of complexity of the case and the relatively high cooperation and understanding of the Defendant, we cannot otherwise justify

or explain the award requested. Defense counsel's rather bare-bones time sheet entries failed to provide that justification, as well. Thus, the Court hereby reduces CJA voucher line 16(b) (obtaining and reviewing records) by \$1,085.00 and CJA voucher line 16(c) (legal research and brief writing) by \$1,082.50 and approves payment to defense counsel in the total amount of \$5,727.50.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Date: 04/08/2010

Sarah Evans Barker

SARAH EVANS BARKER, JUDGE
United States District Court
Southern District of Indiana

Copies to:

Belle T. Choate
CHOATE & HAITH
choate@iquest.net

Barry D. Glickman
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
barry.glickman@usdoj.gov